1 PUBLIC NOTICE 2 TOWN OF CHARLESTOWN 3 4 Notice is hereby given that the Town Council of the Town of Charlestown will conduct a 5 public hearing, open to the public, on June 7, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. 6 7 **This meeting will be held in person at the Charlestown Town Hall, Council 8 Chambers, 4540 South County Trail, Charlestown RI 02813. Comments 9 from the public will be accepted in person only.** 10 11 At the public hearing noted above, the following proposed amendments to the Code of Ordinances will be considered. Opportunity shall be given to all persons interested to be heard upon the matter 12 13 of the proposed ordinance. The following proposed amendments may be adopted and/or altered or 14 amended prior to the close of the public hearing without further advertising, as a result of further study or because of the views expressed at the public hearing. The proposed ordinance is available 15 16 for review at the Town Clerk's Office between the hours of 8:30 am and 4:30 pm, Monday 17 through Friday, excluding holidays, or at charlestownri.gov prior to said hearing. 18 19 **ORDINANCE NO. 397** 20 AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 218 – ZONING 21 22 Section 1. The Town Council of the Town of Charlestown hereby ordains that Chapter 218 of the 23 Code of Ordinances, Town of Charlestown entitled Zoning is amended as follows: 24 25 See Exhibit A for a full version of the proposed amendments. These amendments will 26 delete § 218-52. Residential Cluster Subdivision and replace it with § 218-52. Residential 27 Conservation Development, add related definitions to § 218-5. Word usage and definitions and 28 make compatible amendments to §218-41. Dimensional Table. 29 30 Note: Words set as strikeover are to be **deleted** from the ordinance; words set in underline 31 are to be **added** to the ordinance. 32 33 **Section 2.** The Town Clerk is hereby authorized to cause said changes to be made to the Town of 34 Charlestown's Code of Ordinances. 35 36 **Section 3.** This ordinance shall take effect immediately upon passage. 37 38 Attested To By: Passed By Town Council On: 39 40 41 Amy Rose Weinreich, CMC Town Clerk 42 43 To be Advertised in the Westerly Sun, in full: May 17, 2022 44

§ 218-52. Residential Cluster Subdivision.

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A. Purpose. The purpose of residential cluster is to design alternative subdivisions which provide for permanent preservation of open space, particularly large contiguous areas within the site proposed for development, or linked to off-site protected areas; and to locate development on sites best suited for development, while avoiding land which is ecologically, agriculturally or historically important.

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- B. Applicability. Any major subdivision application (6 or more lots), shall be required to adhere to the cluster subdivision provisions herein. Any minor subdivision application (5 or fewer lots) may be submitted as a cluster subdivision if desired by the applicant. The Charlestown Planning Commission may, at its discretion, permit a conventional subdivision where a cluster would otherwise be required if the applicant can prove to the satisfaction of the Planning Commission that a cluster subdivision is inappropriate due to one or more of the following conditions:
 - (1) Existing features on the land, such as unusual topography, exposed bedrock, waterbodies, and the like that may make a conventional subdivision more appropriate to the site than a cluster subdivision.
 - (2) Prevailing development immediately adjacent to the parcel, such as an existing conventional subdivision to which the proposed subdivision is deemed to be an extension.
 - (3) A clearly documented environmental condition, such as the inability of a cluster subdivision to support wells and septic systems.
 - (4) Any other condition or circumstance, under which the Planning Commission determines that a conventional subdivision will serve the best interests of the Town, and where such conventional subdivision is found to be consistent with the intent and purposes of this Ordinance, is not based on economic considerations, and will provide the best site layout and design.

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C. Subdivision Approval Required. No construction or sale of lots within a residential cluster subdivision shall begin until the plan of such has been approved by the Charlestown Planning Commission according to the Charlestown Subdivision and Land Development Regulations.

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D. Standards.

- (1) Permitted Uses. Only single-family detached homes, agricultural land preserved within open space, open space/recreation areas and the normally associated accessory uses shall be permitted in a residential cluster subdivision.
- (2) Zoning Districts. Residential cluster subdivisions are allowed in R-3A, R-2A and R-40 Zoning Districts, and are required for a major subdivision.
- (3) Minimum Number of Lots. The minimum number of lots in any residential cluster subdivision shall be three lots.

(4) Density.

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(a) The number of developable lots allowed in a residential cluster subdivision shall be the number of lots which would be allowed under a conventional subdivision, determined by the submittal of a yield plan, as defined in the Charlestown Subdivision and Land Development Regulations, and accepted by the Planning Commission.

- (b) In no case shall the number of developable lots be greater than the number permitted under a conventional subdivision.
 - (5) Minimum Lot Size and Frontage. The minimum lot size and minimum road frontage and lot width for a residential cluster lot in the R-40, R-2A and R-3A Districts are shown below, and are contained in the Dimensional Table (§ 218-41) along with all other dimensional regulations for cluster lots.
 - (a) R-40 Cluster.

- [1] Minimum Lot Size = 20,000 SF.
- [2] Minimum Frontage and Lot Width = 100 feet.
- (b) R-2A and R-3A Cluster.
 - [1] Minimum Lot Size = 40,000 SF.
 - [2] Minimum Frontage and Lot Width = 125 feet.
- (6) Community Wells and On Site Wastewater Treatment Systems. Community wells and wastewater treatment systems are permitted, and may be required, by the Planning Commission in place of individual wells and treatment systems. In order to facilitate their establishment, the cluster subdivision open space (see below) may be utilized for the protected area required by a community well or for a community leach field.
- (7) Perimeter Buffer. The Planning Commission may require a vegetated buffer of open space, which may include wetlands, around the entire perimeter, or a portion of the perimeter, of the cluster subdivision, to provide a visual and audio screen between adjacent land uses, with consideration given to the presence of natural resources on an adjacent parcel that would be protected by a buffer. No structure may be built in the perimeter buffer, with the exception of stormwater control and drainage structures, and waterfront structures, such as docks, piers or boathouses, if approved by the Planning Commission. The width of the buffer shall be as determined by the Planning Commission, with consideration of the ameliorative effects of the following:
 - (a) Land adjacent to the cluster subdivision which is already designated as open space, with evidence provided of its permanent protection.
 - (b) The existence of any substantial natural barrier on either the cluster subdivision parcel or adjoining parcel that will serve as a permanent buffer.
 - (c) The presence of sensitive interior lands that would be better protected by perimeter development of the cluster subdivision, as determined by an environmental analysis.
- (8) Open Space. Land permanently protected from development as part of the residential cluster subdivision shall be designated as open space.
- (a) The amount of land area set aside as open space may vary depending upon the characteristics of the land. Although the area designated as open space may include wetland and areas defined as having constraints to development, it shall include a minimum of forty percent (40%) of the total developable land area of the parcel. The Planning Commission may allow up to thirty five percent (35%) of the required open space area to be used for active recreation such as; ballfields, playgrounds, tennis courts, swimming pools, or bike paths. Not more than twenty five percent (25%) of the open space shall be made impervious. Access to open space shall be made readily available to all residents of residential cluster subdivision by providing access corridors of a minimum width of thirty feet. Such access corridors shall be clearly posted to distinguish the corridors and commonly owned space area from private property.

- (b) Land that has been environmentally disturbed or damaged shall not be accepted for a cluster subdivision until such land is restored to a condition that the Planning Commission determines to be satisfactory to effect the purposes of this section.
- (c) Ownership of the open space within a cluster development shall be vested in a legally constituted organization that shall be responsible for the use and maintenance of the open space. Documents specifying ownership shall be submitted to the Planning Commission along with the application for approval, and the Planning Commission shall have the right to approve, modify or reject the proposed form of ownership. As a minimum, the following standards of ownership and management of open space shall be met:
 - [1] The required open space shall be a separate and distinct area, owned in common by all landowners in the development and maintained by a homeowners' association of all the persons having ownership in the subdivision. The Planning Commission may permit the ownership of required open space by a public, quasi-public or private nonprofit organization qualified to maintain such open space.
 - [2] The deed to each lot shall include a fractional interest in the common open space in an amount inversely proportional to the number of lots or dwelling units in the development. The deed shall also include all covenants, restrictions or easements that shall be imposed upon the use, management or maintenance of the open space.
 - [3] The applicant shall provide for and establish a homeowners' association or request the Planning Commission's approval of an alternate method for the care and maintenance of all open space lands and any improvements thereon. Membership in the homeowners' association shall be mandatory for all landowners within the cluster development.
 - [4] The Planning Commission may require specific provisions for maintenance of open space, private improvements, drainage systems and utilities, including requirements for security and liability, through a maintenance bond.
 - [5] A restriction enforceable by the Town shall be recorded by the applicant providing that the land shall be kept in open space, not built upon for accessory uses such as parking or roadways and requires Planning Commission approval for alterations.

§218-52. Residential Conservation Development.

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- A. <u>Purpose</u>. The purpose of conservation development is to allow the flexibility to design residential development to achieve the following objectives, not listed in any order of priority, pursuant to the Charlestown Comprehensive Plan as it relates to resource protection, land use and community services:
- 1. To conserve and link sensitive natural resources, including but not limited to forests, waterbodies, riparian areas, aquifers and habitat areas;
- 2. To protect the quality of the town's groundwater drinking water sources and surface waters for public health and environmental quality;
- 3. To develop a greenway system of connected areas of protected open space to be used for passive recreation and wildlife corridors;

- 4. <u>To protect historical and archaeological resources</u>, and to conserve and create scenic view and preserve the rural character of the town;
- 5. To protect existing farms and forests and areas of the town with productive agricultural and forest soils for continued or future agricultural/silvicultural use by conserving blocks of land large enough to allow for efficient farm and forest operations;
- 6. To more effectively apply low impact development site design and stormwater management practices as the required standard to avoid, reduce and manage runoff to the maximum extent practicable;
- 7. To provide greater design flexibility and efficiency in the siting of services and infrastructure, including the opportunity to reduce length of roads, utility runs and the amount of impervious surfaces required for residential development;
- 8. To allow for and encourage a diversity of lot sizes and housing choices to accommodate a variety of age and income groups, and residential preferences, so that the population diversity of the community may be maintained;
- 9. To encourage more sustainable and resilient development;
- 10. To create neighborhoods with direct visual and/or physical access to open space land; and
- 11. To provide for the appropriate management of protected open space.
- B. Applicability. Conservation development is required for any major subdivision, and is encouraged but not required for all subdivisions of three (3) or more lots. The Charlestown Planning Commission may, at its discretion, permit a conventional subdivision where a conservation development would otherwise be required if the applicant can prove to the satisfaction of the Planning Commission that a conventional subdivision will serve the best interests of the town, and where such conventional subdivision is found to be consistent with the intent and purposes of these regulations, is not based on economic considerations, and will provide the best site layout and design.
- C. <u>Subdivision Approval Required.</u> No clearing of vegetation, land disturbance, or construction within a conservation development subdivision shall begin until the preliminary plan has been approved by the Charlestown Planning Commission. Land that has been environmentally disturbed or damaged shall not be accepted for a conservation development subdivision until such land has been restored to a condition satisfactory to the Planning Commission.

D. Standards.

1. Permitted Uses. Only single-family detached homes, agricultural and forest land preserved within open space, open space/recreation areas shall be permitted in a conservation development subdivision.

2. Zoning Districts. Conservation development subdivisions are allowed in the R-40, R-2A and R-3A residential zoning districts.

3. Density.

- (a) The number of developable lots allowed in a conservation development subdivision shall be the number of lots which would be allowed under a conventional subdivision, determined by the submittal of a yield plan, as defined in the Charlestown Subdivision and Land Development Regulations, and accepted by the Planning Commission.
- (b) In no case shall the number of developable lots be greater than the number permitted under a conventional subdivision.
- (c) When calculating the maximum number of allowable lots on any parcel, constraints to development as defined in this ordinance shall be deducted from the total acreage of the parcel. Such land may be included in any yield plan lot in a subdivision or land development project, provided, however, that such land shall not be counted toward the minimum lot size.
- 4. Minimum Lot Size. The minimum lot size for a residential conservation development lot in the R-40, R-2A and R-3A Districts shall be 20,000 square feet of land considered suitable for development.
- 5. Modification of Lot Requirements. Applicants are permitted to modify lot area, shape, and other dimensional characteristics within a conservation development, as approved by the Planning Commission, so as to achieve the purposes of these regulations. However, the following minimum lot dimensions shown below and contained in Dimensional Table (§218-41) shall be applied to all conservation development lots regardless of zoning district:

Lot Area:	20,000 sq. ft.
Lot Frontage and Width	50 feet
Front Yard	40 feet
Rear Yard	
Primary Structure	50 feet
Accessory Structure	10 feet
Side Yard	
Primary Structure	20 feet
Accessory Structure	10 feet
Building Coverage	<u>15 %</u>

The Planning Commission is authorized to reduce the lot frontage and lot width of newly created lots in a conservation development subdivision on any public or approved private street to a minimum of twenty (20) feet, if doing so achieves the purposes of these regulations.

- 6. Shared Wells and On-Site Wastewater Treatment Systems. Individual private wells and onsite wastewater treatment systems (OWTS) are to be located on the house lots they serve. Shared private wells are to be discouraged. Public wells, which are defined as wells serving more than twenty-four (24) persons, shall be properly installed in compliance with RI Department of Health (DOH) public drinking water regulations and all other applicable state regulations. Public wells and OWTS which serve two (2) or more households and approved by RI DEM, may be permitted in a conservation development subdivision if the Planning Commission determines that such shared use will result in greater protection of open space. In order to facilitate their establishment, the open space set aside in the conservation development subdivision may be utilized for the protected area required by a community well or for a community leach field.
 - 7. Open Space. Land permanently protected from development as part of the conservation development subdivision shall be designated as open space. Protected open space lots, within an approved conservation development subdivision, may have zero-frontage on a street, as long as the Planning Commission approves access to the open space by easement or other means.
 - (a) The amount of land area set aside as open space may vary depending upon the characteristics of the land. Although the area designated as open space may include wetland and areas defined as having constraints to development, it shall include a minimum percentage of the total developable land area (land that is considered suitable for development, as defined in this ordinance) of the parcel according to the zoning district.

R-40 District: **50%** R-2A District: **60%** R-3A District: **70%**

The Planning Commission shall have the flexibility to adjust the percentage of developable land to be protected as open space in any conservation development subdivision in order to better achieve the purposes of these regulations, except however, the required open space cannot be used to reduce the number of residential lots shown in the accepted yield plan.

- (b) The Planning Commission may allow up to ten percent (10%) of the required open space area to be used for active recreation, if said recreational uses do not negatively impact the conservation values of the open space to be protected. Not more than five percent (5%) of the required open space shall be made impervious. Permeable materials are encouraged for uses such as parking areas, and bike paths to the extent possible.
- (c) Access to common open space shall be made readily available to all residents of the conservation development subdivision by providing suitable access corridors. Such access corridors shall be clearly posted to distinguish the corridors and commonly owned space area from private property.

- (d) Ownership of the open space within a conservation development subdivision shall be vested in a legally constituted organization that shall be responsible for the use and maintenance of the open space. Ownership is to be conveyed as follows:
 - (1) To the Town of Charlestown and accepted by it for park, open space, agricultural or other specified use or uses; or
 - (2) To a nonprofit organization, the principal purpose of which is the conservation of open space or resource protection; or
 - (3) To a corporation or trust owned or to be owned by the owners of lots or units within the development, or owners of shares within a cooperative development. If such a corporation or trust is used, ownership shall pass with conveyances of the lots or units; or
 - (4) To remain in private (non-common) ownership if the use is limited to agriculture, habitat or forestry, and, in accordance with the Charlestown Comprehensive Plan and zoning ordinance, that private ownership is necessary for the preservation and management of the agriculture, habitat or forest resources.
- (e) Documents specifying ownership shall be submitted to the Planning Commission along with the application for approval, and the Planning Commission shall have the right to approve, modify or reject the proposed form of ownership. The Planning Commission may limit or restrict the amount of open space that may remain in private ownership where necessary to contribute to a connecting greenway system or to provide public access to open space, as provided in the Charlestown Comprehensive Plan.
- (f) Where the land is not conveyed to the Town of Charlestown, a conservation easement or restriction enforceable by the town shall be recorded by the applicant providing that the land shall be kept in open space, not built upon for accessory uses such as parking or roadways and requires Planning Commission approval for alterations. The *Rhode Island Conservation Easement Guidance Manual* (RIDEM 2009) shall be used to meet the requirements for preparing a conservation easement for the protected open space.
- (g) If the open space option (d) 3 is used the following standards shall apply:
 - (1) The deed to each lot shall include a fractional interest in the common open space in an amount inversely proportional to the number of lots or dwelling units in the development. The deed shall also include all covenants, restrictions or easements that shall be imposed upon the use, management or maintenance of the open space.
 - (2) The applicant shall provide for and establish a homeowners' association or request the Planning Commission's approval of an alternate method for the care and maintenance of all open space lands and any improvements thereon. Membership in the homeowners' association shall be mandatory for all landowners within the development.

§218-5. Word usage and definitions.

COLD WATER STREAM

Coldwater fishery means waters in which naturally occurring water quality and/or habitat allow the maintenance of naturally reproducing indigenous coldwater fish populations.

CONSERVATION DEVELOPMENT

The site planning and design process used to implement cluster subdivisions and land developments. Conservation development guides growth to the most appropriate areas within a parcel of land to avoid and minimize impacts to natural, cultural or recreational resources and other special features of the property, manages stormwater utilizing Low Impact Development (LID) techniques, and requires the set-aside of a permanent area of open space. This technique is further described in the Rhode Island Conservation Development Guidance Manual (DEM 2003). See §218-52 of this ordinance.

CONSERVATION OPPORTUNITY AREAS

Important forest and rare habitat areas that have been defined and mapped by DEM in their Wildlife Action Plan. These areas include:

- (1) Ecological land units
- (2) High value high vulnerability habitat
- (3) Natural Heritage sites
- (3) Core forests 250 acres or greater
- (4) Wildlife corridors

CONSTRAINTS TO DEVELOPMENT

- (1) Resource areas subject to protective setback distance such as but not limited to, wetlands (freshwater or coastal) as defined by R.I. General Law, areas subject to storm flow, areas subject to flooding, hydric soils and inter tidal salt marshes.
- (2) Land located in any V zones or floodways as shown on the Flood Insurance Rate Maps or floodway maps of the Town of Charlestown revised, September 30, 1995, and any revisions thereto.

(3) Any area of the tract proposed to be developed equal to the area of any street, common private way, and/or utility rights of way.

(4) Any unique sites having historical, archeological values or protected species of flora or fauna as defined by state or federal agencies.

(5) Any other lands which if developed would cause a threat to public health, or result in irreparable public harm, or loss of irreplaceable resources.

(6) Any area of ledge and/or rock outcrops at/or within four feet of the land surface as may be identified in the Soil Survey of Rhode Island from the United States Department of Agriculture.

(7) Any area where slopes exceed fifteen percent as may be identified in the Soil Survey of Rhode Island from the United States Department of Agriculture or by topographical survey.

CONSTRAINTS TO DEVELOPMENT

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(1) Freshwater wetlands, as defined by RIGL § 2-1-20 (1987), as amended, and any definitions contained in the rules and regulations governing the Administration and Enforcement of the Freshwater Wetlands Act, adopted pursuant to RIGL § 2-1-20.1., as amended.

(2) Water bodies.

(3) <u>Land located in any Special Flood Hazard Area or floodway, as shown on the Flood Insurance Rate Maps or floodway maps of the Town of Charlestown, dated October 16, 2013, and any revisions thereto.</u>

(4) <u>The following types of coastal features as defined in the RI Coastal Resources Management Program, as amended:</u>

CRMP Section	Type of Coastal Feature
210.1	Coastal beaches
210.2	Barrier islands and spits, undeveloped
210.3	Coastal wetlands
210.4	Coastal headlands, bluffs and cliffs
210.5	Rocky shores
210.6	Manmade shorelines
210.7	Dunes

(5) Any area of the tract proposed to be developed equal to the area of any street, common private way, structural stormwater treatment practice not suitable for on-lot use due to safety and/or maintenance access needs, and/or utility rights-of-way, including drainage, gas or electrical power line easements.

(6) Any area of ledge and/or rock outcrops within four (4) feet of surface.

(7) <u>Cemeteries and required buffers, sites having historical or archeological value as determined by RI Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission or the Narragansett Indian Tribal Council, and sites supporting federally endangered species of fauna or flora.</u>

LAND SUITABLE FOR DEVELOPMENT

Land exclusive of constraints to development, in accordance with state law, and exclusive of land considered undevelopable by means of state definition (including but not limited to freshwater and coastal wetlands buffer). Land suitable for development is used in the application of lot design standards and in the calculation of required open space for cluster-style developments and is not

used when calculating minimum lot area under zoning or in the calculation of the number of lots in a yield plan.

LOW IMPACT DEVELOPMENT (LID)

A comprehensive approach to managing stormwater that is integrated into a project design to minimize the hydrologic impacts of development. The LID design process shapes development to fit into the landscape. The approach to stormwater management focuses on preserving undisturbed open space and reducing impervious cover, and use of natural systems to achieve stormwater management objectives to the extent feasible. The primary goal of LID is to reduce runoff and mimic the predevelopment site hydrology by using site planning and design strategies to store, infiltrate evaporate, and detain runoff as close as possible to the point where precipitation reaches the ground. Stormwater is managed in smaller, cost-effective treatment practices located throughout the development site rather than being conveyed to and managed in one or more centralized facilities located at the bottom of drainage areas. Use of these strategies helps to reduce off-site runoff and ensure adequate groundwater recharge.

Amendments to §218-41. Dimensional Table

Amendments to §218-41. Dimensional Table											
Zoning Districts			Primary Structure						Accessory structures		
	Minimum Lot Size (square feet)	Frontage & Lot Width (feet)	Front Yard (feet)	Rear Line (feet)	Side Line (feet)	Building Coverage (percent)	Building Height (feet)	Building Height (feet)	Front Yard (feet)	Rear Line (feet)	Side Line (feet
Residential											
Districts:											
R-20	20,000	120	40	50	20	20		15	40	10	10
R-40	40,000	150	40	60	25	15		25	40	10	10
R40 Cluster Subdivision*	20,000	100	40	50	20	15	\$ee \$ 218- 42A(2)	15	40	10	10
R-2A	2 acres	200	50	100	35	10	<u>See</u> § 218- 42B	25	50	10	10
R-2A Multi-family **	2 acres per DU	200 + 10/DU	100	60	35	10		25	100	10	10
R-3A	3 acres	300	50	100	35	10		25	50	10	10
R2A, R3A Cluster Subdivision*	40,000	125	50	60	25	10		25	50	10	10
R-3A Multi- family**	3 acres per DU	300 + 20/DU	100	75	35	10		25	100	10	10
R-40, R-2A, R-3A Conservation Development Subdivision*	20,000	<u>50</u>	<u>40</u>	<u>50</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>15</u>		<u>25</u>	<u>40</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>10</u>
Two Family Dwelling ***	2 x min. lot size	R-2A: 250 R-3A/PD: 300	50	100	50	10		25	50	10	10
Non-conforming legal lots of record	Less than 20,000	n/a	30	38	12	*****		15	30	10	10
Less than 20,000 sq.ft.											
Traditional Village District	20,000	120	20	30	20	25	35	35	20	30	20
Nonresidential Districts:											
C-1	20,000	120	40	30	20	25		30	40	30	20
C-2	20,000	150	40	30	20	25	See § 218- 42A(2) § 218- 42B	30	40	30	20
C-3	40,000	150	40	30	20	25		30	40	30	20
Open Space/Recreation	****	100	100	100	35	30		30	100	100	35
Municipal	****	****	30	30	20	30		30	30	30	20
Industrial	80,000	200	100	100	35	30		30	100	100	35
Planned Development	3 acres *****	200	100	100	50	25		30	100	100	50
Non-conforming legal lots of record Less than 20,000 sq. ft.	Less than 20,000	n/a	30	38	12	*****		30	setback of principal structure		

1 **NOTES:** 2 See § 218-52 Residential Cluster Subdivision Residential Conservation Development ** See § 218-51 Multi-Family Dwellings 4 *** See ARTICLE VI § 218-37I(13) Dwelling, Two Family 5 **** No minimum lot size for Open Space/Recreation or Municipal District. No frontage requirement for Municipal District ***** See § 218-48 Planned Development District (PDD) 8 ****** See § 218-43 Non-Conformity with Dimensional Standards 9 DU Dwelling Unit